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HEAVEN'S METAL

THE UN-CAGEY CAGE ISSUE: WHAT HEAVEN'S METAL SAYS

Greetings metal fans. Suffice it to say, this issue has been both extremely challenging and yet incredibly gratifying to bring together. Most of you, if you have been reading HM and Heaven's Metal regularly, are well acquainted with the very popular "What So and So Says" feature. They are a regular staple of HM Magazine, but have appeared with less consistency in these pages. While there are many reasons for why we have not been able to "deliver the goods" in this area, it has not been for a lack of effort. Last year, Chris Gatto missed out on a chance to catch up with veteran doom metal band Trouble because they flat out declined the interview; and I was unable to hook up with Richard West from Threshold—one of the most underappreciated progressive metal bands in the world—when they released their fantastic *Dead Reckoning* last spring.

In retrospect, we didn't exactly plan for this issue to be a "What So and So Says" issue, but that's kind of how it turned out. Fortunately, this time around we bring you not one, but three very candid "What So and So Says" features. I assure you, there is no wishy-washy, cagey hedging going on here; just honest, heart-felt answers to some pretty challenging questions. We are really pleased to introduce you to Cage—an up and coming US power metal band faithful to the "old school" style of metal—and Amaran's Plight—the new side project of Shadow Gallery's Gary Wehrkamp. And I am most pleased to bring you an in-depth and very personal interview with Doug Van Pelt, which I am confident you will find very informative and extremely edifying. Finally, I would be remiss if I didn't mention Chris Beck's insightful piece on Holy Blood, a band Doug feels is one of the most innovative in the metal scene right now. Enjoy.

Jonathan "Doc" Swank



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METAL TRACKS

Hard-news-for-metal-heads



SAINT'S JOHN MAHAN

By **TREVOR RAY**

Getting to chat with and interview one of my all time favorite guitarists John Mahan (ex-Saint lead guitarist) was an all time dream. I caught him on his traveling back home after his friendly NFL football game with some friends. When reflecting on his time with Saint, John admitted that he was going through the motions in being part of a band at that stage of his life, using it to make a statement on the end times and reflecting the music that they were listening to at the time (i.e. Judas Priest, Metal Church, etc). He remembers a few of the early shows that he played in (Cornerstone), while they were still raw and finding themselves as musicians. At Cornerstone they hadn't even released their first album yet.

When asked about the factors that caused John to move on from the Saint, he felt it was personal musical interests. He wanted to pursue interests in his own style, which he describes as a fusion of progressive rock. He spent some time down in California with one of Saint's early ex-drummers (John Purine); where they jammed 5 days a week for 8 months, but nothing materialized. Before the release of *Too Late for Living*, Saint got in touch with John to get him on board to help support touring after the release of *Too Late for Living*. John agreed, even though he never played guitar in the studio recordings for that release. He waited around Oregon to see if anything else would materialize after the album was released and nothing happened, so he moved on and seemingly disappeared off the Christian metal radar.

For the past few years, John Mahan has been based in Kansas City playing with close friends. Right now he feels God is drawing him back into the music scene. His new wife is a bassist; he has lots of contacts around Kansas to accompany him in the new material he has written; it's very original, but has its roots from black metal right through to jazz/fusion. With this deep belief of God in his life, he feels he could get his new material out by 2008. He is seeking a drummer, in the domain of Jayson Sherlock, to help complete this material. Also, Frost Like Ashes invited him into the studio to put down a guitar track for the cover song, "Plan Two," for an upcoming compilation project. John contributed the guitar solo to this song. At the present time, John is playing with Damascus Dawn, a contemporary Christian band with folk and rock flavorings. (myspace.com/damascusdawn)

John's only regret is that he didn't realize the impact that he had on the Christian Metal music scene so many years ago. Dee, the present Saint guitarist, got in contact with him recently and made him realize that he was one of the Christian Metal guitar pioneers. Dee really highlights that John Mahan is a great guitarist and many Christian bands that followed after Saint have been inspired by his fluid guitar work. He did ask that if anyone reads this interview and had tried to correspond with him during the early years of Saint that he was sorry that he didn't respond. Right now he wants to make the effort to communicate with those who do get in touch and looks forward to when he can get his new material out at the end of the year.

News bullets



Now available are ten re-issues by **Mortification** on Metal Mind Productions Poland, under license from Nuclear Blast Records. These include eight Deluxe Digi-paks with bonus photos, media clippings and songs. Re-issues include *Scrolls of the Megilloth*, *Post Momentary Affliction*, *Bloodworld*, *Primitive Rhythm Machine*, *EnVision*, *EvAngelene*, *Triumph of Mercy*, *Hammer of God* and *The Silver Cord is Severed*! 10 Years Live Not Dead double Digi. Also now re-issued by Metal Mind and playable in all regions is the band's *Conquer the World* DVD covering their 2001 world tour. All re-issues are available through roweproductions.com.

Norwegian/Swedish label Momentum Scandinavia has just released their tenth release: **Grave Declaration's** new offering of *The Nightshift Worshiper*. This EP, clocking in at over 25 minutes, was released March 31st and as usual for MS releases, is also a limited edition of 850 pieces only. Musically, it will appeal to fans of symphonic extreme metal like Vaaakevandring, Dimmu Borgir, Children of Bodom, Extol or Crimson Moonlight. For a taste of the music, visit myspace.com/gravedeclaration

Rob Rock and band are performing at the PPUSA festival in Atlanta on September 27th 2008, and it will be recorded for a 2009 Live CD/DVD release on AFM records. This super highly anticipated DVD is Rob's first official DVD release and will include bonus interviews, behind the scenes footage, and selections from current and past bands, tours, rehearsals and concert footage that has been previously unreleased. It will feature song performances from his four highly praised solo albums and other selections from his past studio recordings.

Pasadena, Texas based Christian metal band **Shining Force** has entered the studio with producer Mike Heald (of Wartorn and Helstar) to begin recording its new album, entitled *By the Blood*.

Versallis Records has just released *Liberty N' Justice 4-All The Best Of LNJ*. It features songs from the last three LNJ records, plus four brand new tracks recorded exclusively for this CD featuring guest vocals by **Dug Pinnick of King's X**, Steve Brown of Trixter/Stereo Fallout, Derrick Lefevre of Lillian Ax, **Larry Worley of Fear Not**, and **Dale & Troy Thompson of Bride**. For a limited time you can hear Dale and Troy's track, "Author Of The Flame", on LNJ's myspace page (libertyjustice2). Unlike other LNJ CDs, this release will be available at first only at retail locations in North America and exclusively in Europe through MusicBuyMail and ArtistWorxx.

Versallis Records, well known for their mega-star compilation tribute albums, have a Christian release in the works, and should see the light of day in the fall. The album will be called *Glory Rock*, and will feature many big name artists from both Christian and secular markets, as well as some up-and-coming bands.

Minnesota prog-power metal band **Seventh Calling** has been confirmed to play the Sanctuary Stage at the 2008 Cornerstone Festival.



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Heaven's Metal Karew 2007 Picks

THE BEST METAL YOU MAY HAVE MISSED

TOP 10 CONSENSUS LIST

Rob Rock – *Garden of Chaos*
Immortal Souls – *Wintereich*
Becoming The Archetype – *The Physics of Fire*
Neal Morse – *Sola Scriptura*
Pantokrator – *Aurum*
Veni Domine – *Tongues*
Darkwater – *Calling the Earth to Witness*
Demon Hunter – *Storm the Gates of Hell*
Ultimatum – *Into the Pit*
Deliverance – *As Above, So Below*

WRITER'S PICKS

Todd Walker

Neal Morse – *Sola Scriptura*
Rob Rock – *Garden of Chaos*
Crunchy – *Loserville*
Bride – *Skin for Skin*
Disciple – *Scars Remain (SE)*

Jeff McCormack

Neal Morse – *Sola Scriptura*
Rob Rock – *Garden of Chaos*
Darkwater – *Calling the Earth to Witness*
The Showdown – *Temptation, Come My Way*
Veni Domine – *Tongues*

Loyd Harp

Common Yet Forbidden – *The Struggle*
Armageddon – *Money Mask: Collector's Edition*
Pantokrator – *Aurum*
World to Ashes – *Of What There is to Come*
Crimson Thorn – *Purification (re-issue)*

Chris Gatto

Rob Rock – *Garden of Chaos*
Becoming the Archetype – *The Physics of Fire*
Immortal Souls – *Wintereich*
Kekal – *The Habit of Fire*
Veni Domine – *Tongues*

Mike Larson

Becoming The Archetype – *The Physics of Fire*
Ultimatum – *Into the Pit*
Kekal – *The Habit of Fire*
Deliverance – *As Above, So Below*
Fearscape – *Scent of Divine Blood*

Chris Beck

Rob Rock – *Garden of Chaos*
Virgin Black – *Requiem-Mezzo Forte*
Neal Morse – *Sola Scriptura*
Immortal Souls – *Wintereich*
Darkwater – *Calling the Earth to Witness*

Jonathan Swank

Threshold – *Dead Reckoning*
Becoming The Archetype – *The Physics of Fire*
Darkwater – *Calling the Earth to Witness*
Veni Domine – *Tongues*
Rob Rock – *Garden of Chaos*

Doug Van Pelt

Demon Hunter – *Storm the Gates of Hell*
Pantokrator – *Aurum*
Maylene & the Sons of Disaster – *II*
Immortal Souls – *Wintereich*
As I Lay Dying – *An Ocean Between Us*

In **Deliverance** news, **Mike Phillips** will be releasing a DVD of a recent show (Jan 4th 2008) in the next couple of months. A new Deliverance CD should also see the light by the end of the year.

Sullen Records is pleased to announce that Kansas City based **Frost Like Ashes** has signed on for the release of their new EP titled *Born to Pieces*, which is the follow up to their 2006 acclaimed album *Tophet*. Scheduled to be released this May, it will be available as a limited release with only 250 units to be produced. The band is also scheduled to headline the Sanctuary Tent at Cornerstone Festival.

Virginia rockers **Hemotheory** will be recording their first promotional video in April for a track from their recently released CD, entitled *Zeta*. When finished, watch for it to be posted on Hemotheory.com.

Things are still moving along in the studio for the new **Believer** release. No official release date has been set, but they are hoping for a May/June possibility.

Joshua is also getting prepared to enter the studio with vocalist **Jeff Fenholt**, who was the lead singer on Joshua's 1985 album *Surrender*. The new album is tentatively titled *Resurrection*. Three classic albums by Joshua, which have not been in print for six years, have been remastered and reissued, including *The Hand is Quicker than the Eye*, *Surrender*, and *Chapter One*. Also, keep an eye out for his much anticipated DVD release *Intense Defense: Live in the Studio*. The disc will feature the entire album *Intense Defense* performed live in the studio with Rob Rock on vocals. It will also feature unreleased live performances from the 2001 Salvation Army Benefit Concert, Stryper Expo 2001, and various other live performances, as well as live footage from various appearances with guests Paul Shortino (Rough Cutt), Neal Grusky (Takara) and Jeff Fenholt, as well as promotional videos and other extras.

Eluveitie (Swiss) are one of those bands who presented themselves to a larger audience for the first time at Metalcamp festival. They are also one of the bands who managed to grab their chance, do their absolute best and in the end succeeded to anchor their name in today's massive folk metal scene. This folk metal band with a modern twist will present their newest masterpiece *Slania* at Metalcamp festival. Visit their site at eluveitie.ch.

Back in print! From Milwaukee, Wisconsin, **Scarlet Rayne** has re-issued their magnificent piece of Power/Prog Metal, *Theater Humanitarium*. Available again on CD fully re-mastered, new artwork, complete lyrics, unreleased photos plus and an in-depth biography. CD edition limited to 2000 hand numbered copies, vinyl edition limited to 500 hand numbered copies. Both editions will feature 4 never released before bonus tracks. For more info, visit arkeynsteel.com.

This Fires Embrace has been selected for the *XTX Extreme Tour*.

INO Records recording artist **Disciple** has a new song, "In The Middle Of It Now," which will be among the tracks featured on the World Wrestling Entertainment's (WWE) compilation project *WWE: The Music Vol. 8*. The song was written especially for this project, which should be out now and also includes songs from mainstream rock artists such as Saliva, Axel and Airbourne. Additionally, the song will be used by WWE stars Curt Hawkins & Zack Ryder as the duo's theme song.

The new **Random Eyes** album, *Invisible*, will be out April 9.

METAL TRACKS

Page six



FACT OR FICTION?

I know a guy that listens to P.O.D. and I asked him if he knows what the letters stand for. He told me that he read in Blender magazine that it stands for "pot over dope." I told him in the original days it stood for "payable on death." Did they change what the initials mean? Also, why have a picture of Eternal Ryte on the cover of a recent issue? Are they back together? And fill me in on Once Dead, like what style of metal they play, etc.

—David Maples, via internet

Ed – Ha ha! Payable On Death. Don't believe silly rumors like that – ever. You'll do well in life to heed that advice. Once Dead is classic thrash with some groove like early Vengeance Rising. Eternal Ryte – just a "Where Are They Now?" article. Roxx Productions just re-released one of their albums, that's all.

Doc – In reference to Eternal Ryte: while they are not officially "back together" they were poised to play a reunion show of sorts for Cornerstone California Festival in 2007, but it didn't happen due to scheduling conflicts. The last I talked to Bobbi Smith, he was still optimistic about getting Eternal Ryte "up on stage" again someday.

VINYL CONFESSIONS (FRAMED?)

I hope this e-mail finds you well, and not TOO busy. I'm just sending you a quick e-mail to pick your brain. What have readers, especially older ones like you and me, found to be the best fate for all of those LPs we collected when we were young and possessing disposable income? (Remember those days?) I've got all the great pioneers like Bloodgood, Stryper, Saint, etc., etc. and barring exceptions like Stryper's original EP, most have for years been available on CD. As much as I may pine for the days of extensive liner notes and full-sized album artwork, they ain't comin' back. So: what to do with 35 pounds of great-condition vinyl? Did you keep yours? Just call me baffled in DC. Hope to hear from you soon. All the best,

—Jonesy / "Old Man" J.P. Green, via internet

Doc – Fear not, brother. Not everyone has forsaken the art of presentation... Just see Cage's Hell Destroyer CD (reviewed issue #73) if you want to be blown away by fantastic artwork and liner notes. As for the vinyl, you could always frame them and put them on the wall in your house or garage – they make great art!

Ed – My vinyl is holed up in my closet.

BLESSED BY ZIPPY

Sorry if this is way after the fact. But someone I have missed from the music scene is David Zaffiro. I do searches from time to time on him and came across the "Catching up with David Zaffiro" article. I loved reading it. I wish you would've asked, and maybe you have before, 'Is there any solo music in the future?' He is an awesome guitarist and I love his solo works. I love Bloodgood, too; don't get me wrong, but I was blessed by his solo stuff. I never find a way to contact him, be it email I mean, as I would never call him. He was such a blessing and still is it sounds like. Well thanks for the interview. At least now I know what he is up too. Just miss him and his guitar. Thanks for your time.

—Rick, via internet

FROM EASTWESTTO ORTHODOXY

I happened to come across East West's Wikipedia page and find a podcast/interview with Mike Tubbs. Also, I went to their official site and found that the site is being reconstructed. I wondered if any of this was news to you or not? Here is the link to the podcast: <http://iconnewmedianetwork.com/2007/11/12/from-the-band-east-west-to-the-eastern-orthodox-church/>

—Jared Lacey, via internet

Doc – Interesting discussion on the Christian music industry in that podcast, without a doubt. However, from the discussion I listened to on this link, it sounds, to me, like these believers are unsure about their salvation in Christ. While that doesn't make them heretics, it does set them up for a life of uncertainty / insecurity about their salvation; a view, I believe, ultimately undermines the power of Christ's atoning work to die "once for all" (Heb 10:10) to save, through faith (not works) (Eph 2:8,9) those who believe (John 3:16). Check out Doug's discussion on both these topics in this issue's Meet the Editor feature.

Ed – I'm not sure if I agree with Doc's prognosis on the Orthodox Church. While I fully believe in grace, I don't claim to have 100% of my doctrine in absolute and perfect order. I might be short-sighted somewhere and thus I give room for others' faith expressions (and denominations).

[nothin' but] News bullets

There are three new releases on the Soundmass label which should be available by the time you read this. First, there is the long-awaited release of the first full-length for South Australia metallers **Synnové**, with *The Whore and the Bride*. You can expect music that has moved away from the symphonic/gothic influences of their debut self-titled EP to a more aggressive twin-guitar black metal sound, with plenty of melodic doses of doom and death along the way. Next there is debut album for Australian band **Martyr's Shrine**. Although this name might be new to the scene, it is the creation of **Michael Carlisle** and **Mike Forsberg**, both former members of the legendary Mortification. Their self-titled debut is a 50-minute culmination of years of songwriting plus their love for extreme metal in its truest form, and features a unique blend of death/thrash metal. Lastly, hailing from Germany, we have **Eternal Emperor's** debut EP, *In the Beginning*, delivering heavy blackened death metal with thrash influences and doom metal passages. Think Antestor mixed with My Silent Wake and Sacrificium and you have an idea of what this fantastic introduction sounds like. Soundmass has also recently signed the brand new Australian band **Dei Elithaeon**, who plays a fine blend of thrash, death and progressive metal.

Michael Sweet of **Stryper**: inform us that his wife, "Kyle, is feeling a little better these days. She started a new (third) treatment and she seems to have less side effects. Her numbers went way up and then dropped by two thirds a few weeks later. They are still way above the safe range, but again she's tolerating this drug a bit better. We'll certainly keep all of you updated as we receive new information. Thank you for your thoughts and prayers. We are forever grateful. As far as the new Stryper record goes – I'm still tracking vocals in my studio and we plan to start mixing by the first week in February. We should be finished mixing by the end of February and then we'll master, do a photo shoot and then the rest will be up to the artwork department at Big3 to put it all together and package it. I'm not confirming anything, but I'd say it should be out July or August and, of course, a tour will follow later in the year. I can assure you that it will be worth the wait. The record sounds amazing and it will have everything that you've always wanted a Stryper record to have – melodies, guitar solos, stacked vocal harmonies and screams. Sonically, it's our best to date. It's a very edgy record yet at the same time it retains its melodic sense. The new album is tentatively titled *Murder by Pride*. Sometimes we are murdered by our pride, and our own pride overtakes everything else in our life and we are blinded to that... So many times our pride overtakes what we are supposed to do as believers. [myspace.com/stryper]

After a year of touring **Blissed** gathered input from its fanbase and crafted a new recording, *The End of the World*. It's set to be released in late May. "When we recorded *Waking Up the Dead*, we were still in the basement jamming, finding our sound. When we recorded *Corrosive*, we had our sound down, but we wrote the project with something to prove, to show that with a line-up change we were the same band, but with *The End of the World* we wrote a project for the pure enjoyment of making music," states front-man **David Pearson**.

Satisfy your soul...

FEAR THIS!



GRAVE ROBBER – BE AFRAID +1

If you like your gothic/horror hard rock spiked with a little arsenic and a healthy dose of dark humor, check out Be Afraid! Band members Dr. Cadaver, Nameless, and Maggot offer you chainsaw guitars, super-tight arrangements, and blatant morbidity wrapped around insanely catchy choruses. Wretched provides elite vocal skills in a mesmerizing Danzig/Rob Halford sort of way! For fans of Alice Cooper, Type-O-Negative, The Misfits and Danzig! See them in concert at Cornerstone 2008! Includes industrial remix by Angel of the mainstream metal band DOPE!
myspace.com/graverobberpunk



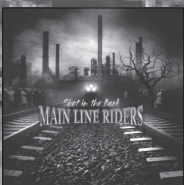
WHITECROSS – NINETEEN EIGHTY SEVEN (with 6 bonus tracks)

Complete Re-recording of original debut self-titled 1987 release featuring the bonus tracks "Love On The Line" and "Re:Animate" (all Rex Carroll guitar jam/solo) + 4 hidden out takes. Fans of Ratt, Motley Crue, and Stryper won't find anything more worthy of their money than this release! Originally released on Girder Records, this instant classic now finds new life with Retroactive Records.



ULTIMATUM – INTO THE PIT

The masters of thrash metal are back!!! Into the Pit qualifies as a juggernaut of North American metal. Following the footsteps of fellow peers Exodus, Tourniquet, Vengeance Rising, Megadeth, Overkill, and Forbidden, expect fiery, blowtorch riffs and scorching solos, thundering bass, fast drumming and a wealth of Mastodonian riffery, the boys have clearly learned from their elders, and learned well!



MAIN LINE RIDERS – SHOT IN THE DARK

Anthemic hooks, cleverly mixing snarl and attitude, the band has no problems paying homage to their musical rabbis, AC/DC, Guns-n-Roses, and Skid Row, while appealing to fans of modern day bands Vains of Jenna, Buck Cherry, and The Showdown.

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PROGRESSIVITY

What Amaran's Plight Says

BY JONATHAN SWANK

FOR THOSE OF YOU WHO HAVEN'T BEEN ABLE TO GET ENOUGH OF THE GREAT PROG ROCK/METAL OFFERED LATELY, YOU WILL WANT TO CHECK OUT THIS FANTASTIC NEW PROJECT PRODUCED BY GARY WEHRKAMP OF SHADOW GALLERY. AMARAN'S PLIGHT IS DC COOPER ON VOCALS, GARY WEHRKAMP (GUITARS, KEYS), NICK D'VIRGILIO (SPOCK'S BEARD) ON DRUMS AND KURT BARABAS (UNDER THE SUN) ON BASS. IN 2007 THE BAND RELEASED, *A VOICE IN THE LIGHT*, A CONCEPT PIECE BASED ON A SOON-TO-BE-RELEASED NOVEL WRITTEN BY CHRISTIAN AUTHOR AND LYRICIST, JOHN W. CRAWFORD. JOHN ALSO HELPED DC AND GARY WITH PRODUCTION AS WELL. (FOR A SYNOPSIS OF THE STORY, SEE MY REVIEW IN HEAVEN'S METAL #73). ACCORDING TO JOHN, THE STORY IS "LOOSELY BASED ON A TRUE STORY." IT MIGHT BEST BE LABELED THOUGHT-PROVOKING FICTION WITH A CHRISTIAN WORLDVIEW AND JOHN ADDS, "THERE IS A LOT OF IMBEDDED INFO WITHIN THE CD. YOU HAVE TO REALLY DIG DEEP AND LISTEN CLOSE." WHILE IT IS NOT UNCOMMON THESE DAYS TO SEE A BOOK MADE INTO A MOVIE, IT IS MUCH MORE UNUSUAL – FASCINATING EVEN – TO SEE A BOOK PUT TO MUSIC. LISTEN IN AS SONGWRITER/PRODUCER GARY WEHRKAMP SHARES HIS FEELINGS ABOUT THE PROJECT AND THE CHALLENGES INVOLVED WITH THIS TYPE OF ENDEAVOR, AS WELL AS THE ROLE HIS FAITH PLAYS IN MUSIC.

Gary, congratulations on the release of another fantastic concept piece with *Voice in the Light*. I understand that John Crawford wrote the story for this project and helped guide you in the song-writing process as well. As a busy musician, music teacher and chief songwriter for your band Shadow Gallery, what motivated you to pursue this concept album? How did this whole project come about?

Motivation? I am not sure. I try to take on all opportunities that I think I can contribute to, as long as I have time, but I also have to factor in many other things as well, including finances and if I like the project, the ideas, the people in mind... I basically agreed to hear what John had to say, and we started on a roll of "well, if we make this record, then we have to make it great, and this is what we have to do ... etc." until I found myself making demos of the first few songs, then I realized we could have something. I was musically very inspired at the time.

How much of the story is based on true life events?

Some. I believe there are portions of truth in this story and within the characters; there are people we know, but it is not a delineation of events of people we know.

How do you feel about the main character's actions in this story and what lessons for life might be garnered from the events as told?

I had a hard time understanding or believing the actions he took, so I spent a lot of time with John trying to construct other dimensions to the story. John probably got tired of me asking so many questions all the time, some rhetorical, and some just to help guide the story-line ideas down new paths, but that was my job as the producer. As far as what may be collected by this story, well, that is certainly up to each individual. Not every listener is required to get fully involved with the story and the points and morals in-between the notes and words. Thus, each listener sets forth their own level of attention.

How did you come to collaborate with DC Cooper, whose vocal performance on this CD is truly inspiring? You guys did some work together on Shadow Gallery's *Tyranny*, correct?

Yes we did, many years ago. However, we didn't work together much. We spent more time hanging out – afterwards over dinner and telling stories of our bands – but we did both appreciate the finished results of coming together and he and I did keep in touch over the years agreeing to do more and work together again some day. Well, that day came when I signed on to write and produce a new project that needed a singer with range, emotion, style, finesse and grace. I also knew he could write, as we had started writing songs together a year earlier, so he was an easy choice.

What were some of the musical challenges in bringing this project to fruition?

Communicating with John, who is not a musician. Each step of the way, DC and I had to stop and explain to John the way it comes together with making a record. We were happy to answer John's questions and show him what we had learned, but it did slow the process down a good deal. Time is also a challenge. We were working on other records – so juggling the time in-between recording and touring – but if something ... some idea is good enough and worth pursuing, then even time cannot stop it... It will be achieved as long as the will remains and the optimism stays strong with ambition.

What is one of your favorite songs/most gratifying moments on the CD and why?

Finishing "Shattered Dreams" and/or "Incident at Haldeman's Lake," because they were both big undertakings, which had some initial issues of either how we were going to achieve something or they contained passages that were challenging to record.

What is the meaning/significance, if any, behind the name Amaran's Plight?

You will see, perhaps, in 2009.

I have long admired your work with Shadow Gallery, and I am enjoying this new project immensely. It seems to me there has always been an element of God in your music ... a Christian world-view that comes through in the lyrics. How purposeful or not is that?

It is intentional, but in a personal way... It usually starts with the lyricist, which with Shadow Gallery is Carl Cadden-James, although we have all had a hand at some of the lyrics at some point. I can tell you this ... some of my favorite lyrics are ones I didn't write myself, but are lines that Carl has composed... Some specific ones come to mind that really hit me, such as: "No bag of gold can save their souls / it's like they never feared / but now the end is near / the flames start leaping" (from the song "Ghost of a Chance" on Shadow Gallery's *Tyranny*) ... or even, "I / I could never find solace in another eye / and then you came into my life / I've come out from the cold alone I walk a broken road / Through wind I heard you calling / Now my eyes can cut a path into your light." (from the song "Questions at Hand" on *Shadow Gallery*).

Perhaps no one has ever asked you this question in an interview, but in lieu of these discussions, what do you think of Jesus' claim to be "the Way, the Truth and the Life?"

It is what I believe and what I know to be true. In many cases, in difficult situations, I ask myself, "What would Jesus do under these circumstances," and then the answer begins to become more clear to me.

As a follow up to that, what role does faith play in your music and songwriting in general?

I express myself musically and lyrically about a great many number of things, and my spirituality is included in some songs, but I do not like to tell others what to do or believe. I would rather leave some insight that may make them find their own answers in similar ways if it suits them.

What kind of music inspires/what artists inspire you and your songwriting?

It depends on my mood perhaps, and if I am to get



"In many cases, in difficult situations, I ask myself, 'What would Jesus do under these circumstances,' and then the answer begins to become more clear to me."

inspired, it happens quickly. There have been times I have played a song and I found inspiration hit me so fast that I shut the song off right away, never getting the chance to even hear the rest of it so I can get to work right away.

Where do you plan to go from here with Amaran's Plight and Voice in the Light?

Hopefully start another one – after I catch my breath – and catch up on a dozen or more things that I have been putting off.

Finally, what plans do you have for Shadow Gallery in the upcoming future?

Hopefully start another one – after I catch my breath – and catch up on a dozen or more things that I have been putting off.

Thanks, Gary, for taking the time out from your busy schedule for the interview.

It was great talking to you! I wish you all the best.

HEAVENS



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GRAVE ROBBER
Be Afraid

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SAINT
Crime Scene Earth
(80's Metal)

Fist Pumping, hard hitting, metal musically some of their best work yet, Saint finally cover a Judas Priest song "Invader".



THIEVES & LIARS
When Dreams Become..
(Classic Rock)

Classic Rock fans can rejoice, Rock and Roll is Not Dead. For fans of REZ Band, Led Zeppelin, AC/DC, Pink Floyd and others.



CAGE
Hell Destroyer
(Metal)

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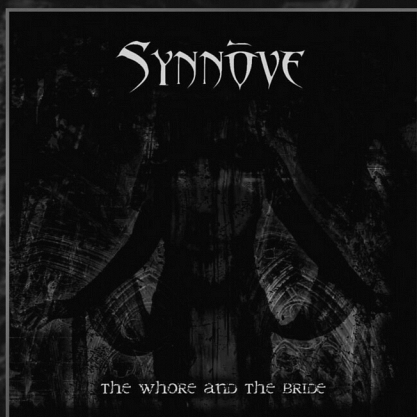


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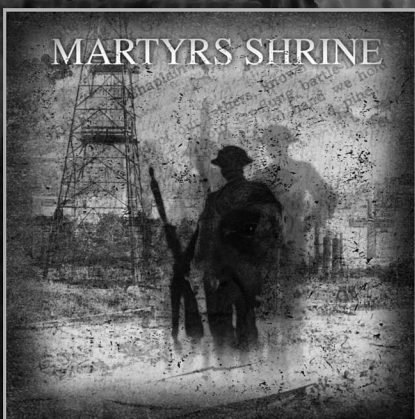
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Dissonance . . . Harmony

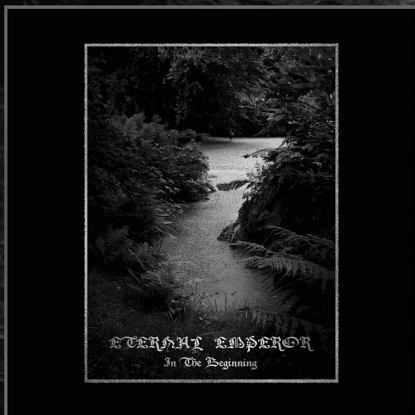
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CAGE Pictured (clockwise from top):
Anthony Wayne McGuinniss; Mike Giordano;
Dave Garcia; Norm Leggio; and Sean Peck.

anatomy of a CAGE

INTERVIEW BY CHRIS GATTO

ONE OF MY GREATEST PLEASURES AS A LIFELONG HEADBANGER IS TO “DISCOVER” A METAL BAND PREVIOUSLY UNKNOWN TO MYSELF, BE THEY NEW OR OLD, THAT JUST BLOWS ME AWAY AND DIVE INTO THEIR CATALOG HEADFIRST. CAGE HAS BEEN AROUND FOR QUITE SOME TIME, BUT THEIR NAME IS BEING SEEN MORE AND MORE OF LATELY, WITH GOOD REASON. POWER METAL, OR SO-CALLED “TRUE METAL,” HAS LONG BEEN A MOSTLY EUROPEAN MARKET. BUT THIS AMERICAN BAND TURNS THE GENRE ON ITS HEAD—COMBINING THE BEST OF OLD SAVATAGE AND NEWER ICED EARTH—WHILE BRINGING POWER METAL BACK TO ITS NWOBHM ROOTS, YET REMAINING FRESH AND MODERN SOUNDING. TOP THAT WITH A CONCEPT ALBUM ABOUT REVELATIONS AND IT’S ABOUT TIME FOR A “WHAT SO AND SO SAYS” TYPE INTERVIEW WITH CAGE’S SINGER SEAN PECK.

Hey Sean, how's it going? Tell me about Cage's latest album.

A lot of work went into making it (the *Hell Destroyer* album) as killer as it is. People that are fans of metal are really taking notice of it.

Who are your musical heroes?

Old school metal: Judas Priest, Maiden, W.A.S.P., Stryper, Dokken, Ratt, Metal Church, Savatage and early Crimson Glory (two of the best metal albums ever in my opinion). Cage has harnessed a little of each of those bands and infused some heavier elements from Testament and Bay Area thrash to create our sound.

Nice. Is *Hell Destroyer* new territory for Cage, or similar to the older albums?

Our previous albums are in the same vein, but our trademark has been to progress from album to album. It is important for us to keep the quality high.

Do you do a lot of touring, other than the major festivals?

No, not really. We're all business and family men. Family comes first and metal and business are probably tied for second, ha! 2008 is looking to be our busiest year ever as far as shows go. We are honored and excited to be doing the Cornerstone festival. We will be playing Puerto Rico, Florida, Mexico (at least two runs), two European runs and possibly New York as well. Two weeks is the most we will go out for at any one time. My real estate empire might suffer otherwise!

***Hell Destroyer* is based loosely upon the end times as written in the Bible, with some considerable literary license. What made you choose this theme for a concept album?**

Well, before I embarked on this I made sure that I consulted with some of my pastors to get their blessing as the liberties that I took with Revelations were meant to entertain and educate in a way. I wanted to take the ultimate concept, the battle between Good and Evil, the forces of God vs. the Devil, and really cover the story in explicit detail. The booklet contains extra text and extra images to help with the music, interlude pieces and songs to tell the story from the Last Supper to the apocalypse and beyond. That is one reason the album is so long. A lot of research went into it to make people listen and think how it just might come down on Judgment Day. Our hero, The “Hell Destroyer” is created as God's most fearsome battle angel who descends into Hell City to lay waste to it once and for all after Satan is

killed in battle above on earth. With some conspiracy theory stuff thrown in, we have an epic tale that people have really gotten into. I wanted to open the eyes of non-Christians and make them think as well as provide some imagery from God's perspective instead of the over used, ridiculous Satanic imagery that is so prevalent in metal in general.

You do a very convincing job of making me believe you are one of the disciples of Christ and then the Beast himself in the album. To which camp do you belong ... or are you just telling a story?

Are you kidding? On the side of the Lord, of course. I have not read the Bible all the way through to this point, but we studied it and found many parts fascinating as we tried to complete the tale. We take songs and make them sound wicked for the metal music sake but good always wins out in the end in our music. Even from the first album we wrote people noticed the “white metal” aspect to our music. We shroud it so that it can more effectively infiltrate and influence their lives. The scary songs were made to make people fear the Evil that we face all around us.

What part does faith play in the songs you write, or how do you conduct yourself on stage?

Well, for *Hell Destroyer* it really brought the faith thing to the front and center as far as Cage goes. It is a very Christian album and I liken it to the metal version of the *Left Behind* book series. My personal faith has become increasingly important part of my life over the last six years or so and as the leader of the band I have done my best to share that with the band, who are all Christians as well. On stage some times I will get heavy with the crowd and say, “I need you all to draw a spiritual line in the sand right now!” Then we usually break into “Christhammer” and it goes off! That song has a double meaning as it refers to the artifact to help tell the story and also a verse I got from Jeremiah where Christ says, “Is my word not unlike a fire or a hammer that smashes the rock to pieces?” Very powerful. I can commune with the Lord when I sing it. It gives me chills.

I enjoyed it very much—probably my favorite song on the album.

Really? Very cool. That song went through many changes before the final version was complete.

I appreciate your candor. I realize this interview is probably a little different than the norm. You mentioned Stryper earlier, but there were and are

a lot of other Christian bands out there waving the metal flag, as well as mainstream bands that incorporate faith into their music, so Cage isn't alone.

Love it. We plowed on through the 90's when Grunge tried to take over. It was a key to our early success as we opened for Maiden, Priest and many others early on because the local bands had abandoned metal while we stood fast and refused to chase the trends. I have some CDs from Barren Cross and others but did not pay much attention to them in the early days. My buddy back in the early 90's was a huge Christian metal fan. I had some tapes he gave me from some killer bands that we played all the time.

There's some speculation that the popularity of metal is tied directly to who sits in the Oval Office, kind of like of backlash to conservatism. Your thoughts?

It's funny you say that. I don't believe it is a backlash, rather the independent, free-thinking, self empowerment, strong military; even ideals from conservatism somehow allow metal to rise up again. Reagan and W's era have been metal's strongest time. Clinton got in and the “blame everyone else for your problems,” PC, even anti-Christian attitude brought metal to its knees for 8 years.

That's certainly a different take on it. Can I ask what the backmasking on track 10 says?

It would detract from the mystery of the album. It is another attempt to make people very wary of the true Evil that surrounds us. The Antichrist and Satan are in the Bohemian Grove, a true place of wickedness, planning their final assault on Earth.

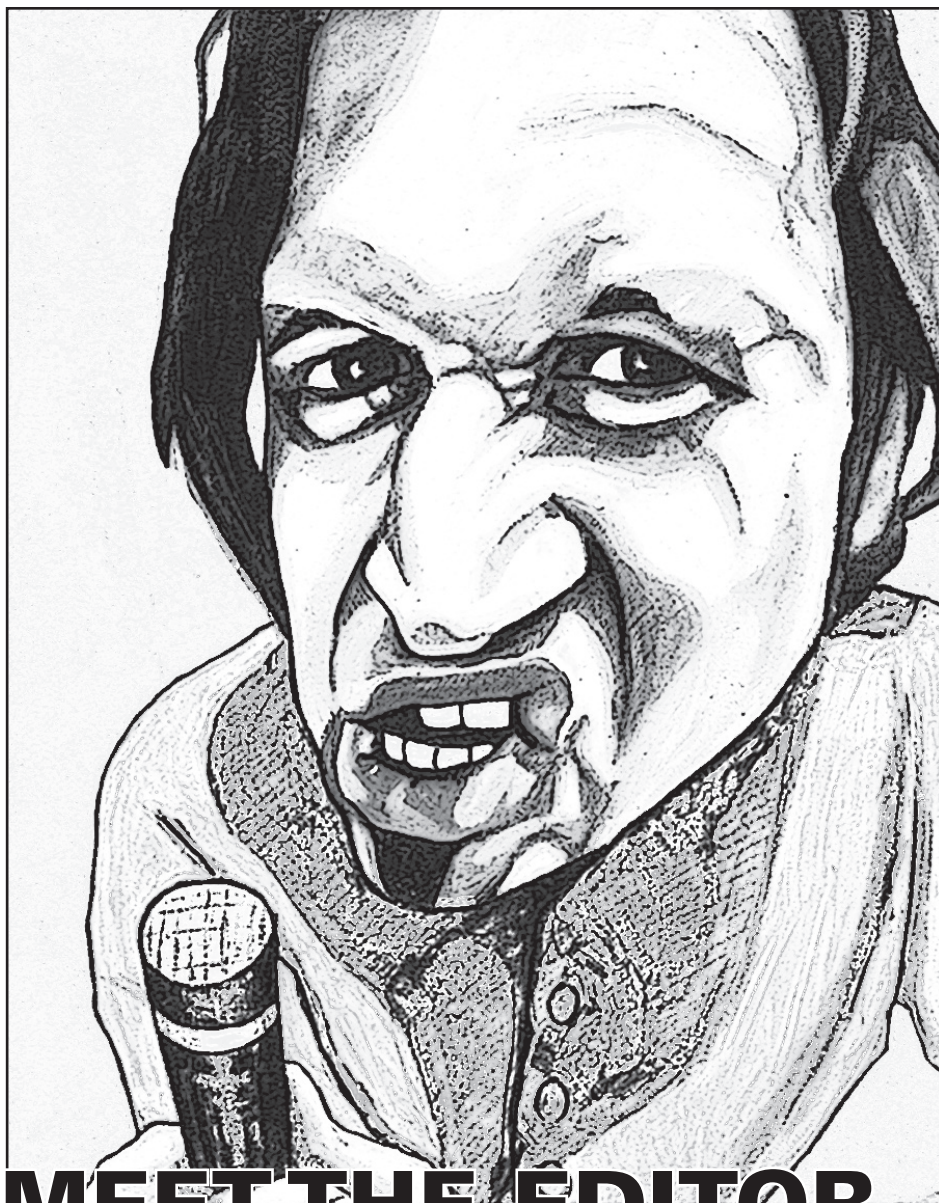
Very cool. I think with this interview, you'll have a whole new group of fans rooting for Cage. It's been great talking to you and metal blessings to you and the band.

Thanks and please let everyone know that we are a band of the people and love to hear from the fans. Our music and gear is available directly from the band and we always answer everyone personally at cageheavymetal.com and mspace.com/cageheavymetal. All the best and God Bless!

Thanks Sean for the time. Hope to hear from you guys again!

HEAVEN'S
GATTO

SOME TIME AGO, THE KAREW AND I DECIDED THAT A “MEET THE PRESS” 200-WORD BLURB JUST WASN’T AN APPROPRIATE WAY FOR OUR READERS TO “MEET” OUR BELOVED AND ILLUSTRIOUS EDITOR. SO WE CAME UP WITH THE IDEA TO DO THIS INTERVIEW AS A “WHAT SO AND SO SAYS” FEATURE. WHAT BETTER WAY COULD THERE BE TO INTERVIEW “THE INTERVIEWER” HIMSELF THAN TO TURN THE TABLES, SO TO SPEAK, AND GIVE HIM A “DOSE OF HIS OWN MEDICINE?” WHILE DOUG WAS HAPPY THAT I DIDN’T PERFORM THE USUAL “DEEP EXPLORATION” FOR WHICH MY PROFESSION IS SO NOTORIOUS, HE DID GRACIOUSLY CONSENT TO AN IN-DEPTH EXAMINATION – WHICH IN THIS DOCTOR’S OPINION WAS LONG OVERDUE. AFTER ALL, NOT ONLY HAS HE ACCOMPLISHED WONDROUS THINGS IN THE CHRISTIAN METAL AND HARD MUSIC COMMUNITY OVER THE PAST 23 YEARS, HE’S A SOLID CHRISTIAN AND A GREAT ENCOURAGER TO MANY. MOREOVER, HE HAS TAUGHT ALL OF US – THROUGH THESE VERY INTERVIEWS – HOW TO TALK TO OTHERS ABOUT JESUS IN AN OPEN AND HONEST MANNER. WHILE MY PROGNOSIS FOR DOUG IS EXCELLENT, I THINK IT’S IN THE DEPTH, PASSION, AND SINCERITY OF HIS WORDS WHERE YOU WILL FIND A PRESCRIPTION OF “GRACE AND PEACE” FOR YOUR SOUL.



MEET THE EDITOR

What Doug Van Pelt Says

INTERVIEW BY JONATHAN SWANK | QUESTIONS BY THE HEAVEN’S METAL KAREW

The Magazine

Well, let’s start off by talking about the magazine. Let’s go back in time, I guess ... about 23 years. What in the world were you thinking when you started Heaven’s Metal in 1985?

Well, I guess a little background info... Just going way back when I was a little kid, like 6 or 7 years old, I kinda discovered rock music and that I really liked Led Zeppelin and Deep Purple and even a little Motown, just listening to the local radio there in Florida. But when I got to junior high and high school, rock music was king. I learned a lot ... I picked up a lot of attitudes... And a lot of that was from reading interviews in magazines. I used to favor *Circus* a little more than *Creem*, but used to get both all the time. And, you know, like a lot of people who are interested in something, I became like a walking encyclopedia: “Oh, you wanna know something about Ted Nugent, blah, blah, blah...” So, maturing up, I knew in the back of my head, the power of rock journalism or of rock magazines.

Then, my story as a Christian... For 9 years I was away from the Lord, as a prodigal son. But in the middle of my college years I came back to the Lord and gave God my musical choices. I started quickly gobbling up as much Christian rock as I could find, discovering that there was a lot out there. I discovered *CCM* magazine and their radio tip sheet. And I was reading a publication called *ACME* (Alternative Christian

Music Enthusiasts). They said in passing, “With the advent of Christian heavy metal, someone should start a Christian heavy metal newsletter or magazine.” And I thought to myself, ‘I can do that.’ I formulated this idea and vision which was always to be a full blown mag, even though it was gonna start with no budget and no investment capital. The goal was always to be on the shelf next to *Rolling Stone* and *Circus*. So that is what I was kinda thinking, that this would reflect my love for Christian heavy metal and hard rock music ... to try to meet the needs of the bands who need the publicity, to get the word out about what they are doing; and meet the needs of the fans, and hopefully edify the fans too, because, “Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.”

Very cool. Well, when did you know that this was going to go somewhere?

Well, about a year later... When the magazine first launched, my friend Carey Womack, who later started One Bad Pig, said, “Hey, I’m going to the Cornerstone Festival on July 4th, why don’t you print your first issue and I’ll hand them out as a promotion?” And, I gave it to my roommate, who was hooking up with Carey as they drove to Cornerstone. My roommate later told me that he was so embarrassed by the Xerox quality that he kept all 30 copies in his bag. I think he gave two out, one to Glenn Kaiser. So it has some really humble beginnings. I took out two classified ads, one in *CCM* and one in *Kerrang!* The ad in *Kerrang!* just happened to be in their 100th issue (with Motley Crue on the cover) – which was their first issue actually printed in



both the UK and North America – so it had a circulation of an extra 100k copies. So the fact that my randomly sent in ad ended up in their biggest issue ever didn't seem like a coincidence.

Wow.

It wasn't until the next spring, about a year later, when I got a letter from Gavin Morkel (the Vice President of Refuge Records, who were starting Pure Metal Records) and he said, "We like what you're doing and want to throw our advertising behind you and here's a package of 5 new albums." So that was when I kinda knew that some people in the industry were noticing what I was doing and that it would probably go somewhere.

When did you first realize that it was making a difference in someone's life?

I guess early on, back in those days ... getting letters from people and hearing from a few people here and there were early indications that it was hitting a need. I remember Robby Lee, the guy from Armageddon who was in a band called Second Chance at the time. Rex Scott of Zion (now X-Sinner) was an early collaborator. When I first met up with Jim Laverde of Barren Cross, he was just like ... his eyes were real wide and he was holding it in his hand and just really encouraging me saying that this was gonna do great and this was a wonderful thing. Little pieces of encouragement like that went a long way in what I was doing.

Very good. Well, this may seem like a foolish question, but why did you change the format of the magazine in the mid 90's?

As far as the format goes, it has been evolving over time, but the name change... In 1995, about a year or two before that point in time, I was at Frontline Records... I think I traded some ad space in exchange for being able to use their video editing facility at night. They gave me the key and I went in there by myself and used their Video Toaster to put together the *Heaven's Metal Video Magazine Volumes II and III*. And late one night, one of the guys, named Michael Sean Black, came in and went to his desk and I stopped in and chatted with him and he goes, "You should change the name of your magazine to HM." And I'm like thinking, 'You idiot, I hate your guts. Just get out of my face. I don't want to have this conversation.' The name Heaven's Metal just seemed like the perfect name for a Christian heavy metal magazine. So the idea of changing it seemed like, "What, do you change the name of your kid after 10 years?" About a year or two later, when I had started using the phrase "Your Hard Music Authority" and marketing companies like Concrete Marketing started releasing logos and press releases about how "hard music" was the new catch phrase ... and Nirvana had destroyed glam and hair metal with one song in '91... and almost every major market had a station with X in the call letters and it was alternative and everything was changing. The idea was that metal was a genre that was dying a commercial death. Most of the metal world was delving into the extreme versions of death metal and black metal, which was very anti-commercial. The phrase "metal"

in *Heaven's Metal* was a weight around our neck; it was hurting us instead of helping us. So that was the impetus as to why I changed the name. It was really difficult to do, because I felt that I gave birth to that magazine and to change the name was a big deal. But people love to abbreviate things. People were calling us HM for years. And HM seemed to be the only name change I could make, without leaving *Heaven's Metal* behind, because HM stands for *Heaven's Metal*.

We did have some pressure from external forces that being associated with metal was hurting us in the eyes of the record companies that were changing. Back in the day, major record companies like Atlantic, Epic, Columbia ... they all had a Metal division. Slowly but surely they would close the metal divisions. The Christian record companies – for the first time in only 3 incidences that I can think of where they actually took the lead in the music business – ran away and ditched metal quicker than anybody else. It was a really rough transition to go through as a magazine, because a lot of the metalheads felt like we had betrayed heavy metal and turned our back on the genre.

Yeah, that's a good segue into another question that I had which was why did you then resurrect *Heaven's Metal*? Was that a factor in bringing it back as a fanzine?

I guess to give a little background information ... at the time, after the new millennium... the most popular form of music with 15 year old males was hardcore and metalcore type music, like Living Sacrifice and Zao and Embodiment. If you really wanted to figure out what style of music HM championed, for better or worse, it was that style. And, the readers of the mag over time – their tastes changed and evolved. Whenever they would be reading about a band like P.O.D. or Zao and then turn the page and see an article on Bride, it would kind of rub them the wrong way. More and more I realized that the older school metal didn't have a place in HM as it used to, just because things have changed and it would cause a strong reaction to the negative. We have never wanted to be the champion of old music; we always wanted to be the champion of edgy music, guitars in your face, distortion. There was pressure to not cover metal as much if we were to serve what our perceived audience was. So anyway, I started a segment of the magazine called Heaven's Metal, which was a page where we could cover the Stryper news and the Bride and Guardian and the older bands that didn't fit so comfortably aside Zao or AILD.

But anyway ... on Labor Day weekend, I guess in 2004, I woke up at like 2 or 3 in the morning and I had an 11-point outline in my head to bring *Heaven's Metal* back as a side publication. And to me, having that much detail – literally 10 or 11 points of this new idea – seemed like, 'Wow ... this is a God thing.' You know, why would I have that many specific details in a dream on my own? Of course, I wrote all those things down and figured I could pull this off ... And I knew there was a small, but enthusiastic segment of people out there that would appreciate it. With no marketing whatsoever, except for maybe a one half-page ad in

HM, we went from zero to 600 subscribers in just a couple months.

Very cool.

I don't know why I am doing it yet, really!

We're there with ya! What do you think is the biggest mistake you've made with the publication?

Back in 1996 or 97, I got a CD in the mail early on in the fall, and it was the album *My Own Prison* by Creed. I listened to it, but not too carefully. It just didn't register with me that this was a band that was either Christian or something that we should cover. (I get music from everybody – secular and Christian and even cCm.) Then, about 6 months later, after the song "My Own Prison" had become a hit on alternative radio, a lot of Christians were like, "This is a Christian band; listen to what he is talking about." So then, I started getting letters, like people saying, "Are you gonna cover Creed? Are they Christians?" (I had established HM as a resource for people... Christians could find out about bands that were of interest to Christians in the pages of HM.) So then, I reached out to a record label contact I had. And like a lot of interviews, if it's a really big band, and it's in between publicity cycles, you're not gonna get the interview. So, that window had passed and Creed had blown up. I was like, "Dang it, I had a chance, I could have been on the front of the Creed wave." They sold, by the end of their career, over 30 million albums. I could have been one of the early publications to publicize them, period, much less break the news that Scott Stapp was writing from a Christian perspective. It would have been huge.

I think the Creed example is a good one and it brings out a lot of the... kinda my perspective on looking at music is the same way. I am constantly sniffing for any whiff of spirituality in any kind of music that I listen to, so that is definitely something I can relate to. Well, let me ask a fun question. When a new issue of HM or Heaven's Metal arrives at the HM ranch, what is the first thing you check out?

I flip through it. The first thing I look at is the front cover ... then I flip it over and stare at the back cover. Then I open up to the color section. The section I am most excited about getting to is the middle section of color because those are the feature articles that break the mold. When it comes to the features, I break the rules and splash it with color and crazy layouts. So, that is one of the sections I am most excited to visually see how it turns out. Because, your computer screen tells you one thing but when it's printed on paper it's different.

If you had to pick one section that you like to read first, which then do you go to?

It might be an article that I've written; probably something that I'm looking forward to seeing because I wrote it or I designed it. And it might be the "So and So Says," because it's always a fun conversation.

Yeah, I think for me, that's the part I always go to first.

Continued on page 20

ALBUM REVIEWS



SAINT

CRIME SCENE EARTH

2008 finds Saint still cranking out the heavy molten metal like a master. Musically they are as hot as ever, but vocally Josh has chosen a slightly different style on the majority of tracks, using a lower range gruffness. It took a little getting used to but it works with the barrage of metal guitars behind it. Having been compared to Judas Priest, this time around we find a cover of Priest's track "Invader," which they pull off with ease, sounding more like classic Saint than ever. Saint has been rocking the world for close to thirty years now, and this release shows they haven't lost an ounce of power and will hopefully be around for a lot longer.

[Armor Records] Jeff McCormack

VOMITOUS DISCHARGE

FESTERING CARCASS COVERED WITH ROT

I feel the need to start with a disclaimer: this CD is not for everyone. However, you probably already know that just by looking at the title. VxDx is a one-man project from Germany, founded by Gag. His motive is to create extreme grindcore of the gore-grind variety, but with one vast difference – the lyrics on this CD do not glorify violence, destruction, Satan, perversion and the like. Instead, the music is a medium to propagate the message of Jesus Christ, albeit in an unconventional way. Gag uh, well . . . gags, burps and vomits all kinds of noise set to blastbeats and minor chord riffing. Lyrically, he tackles sexual immorality, Satanism, perversion, blasphemy and judgment for such. If you are not already familiar with the grind core scene, this CD is probably not going to be for you. However, if you are looking for a refreshing alternative to the darkness typically found in that scene, definitely check out this band!

[Independent] Loyd Harp



PASTOR BRAD

SHREDDED SWEET

Well, he has done it again. Pastor Brad and friends have given us another offering of instrumental guitar mayhem in this third instrumental release. However, don't blow him off as just one of those shredding tons-of-notes-per-second guitar geeks. This CD

has structure, melodies and all around fun tunes put to an 80's metal feeling backdrop. Yes, there are some shredding moments for all of us air guitarists, but that does nothing to deter this from being quite an enjoyable listen throughout. [Independent] Jeff McCormack



FEARSCAPE

SCENT OF DIVINE BLOOD

I put this in my stereo on my way home from a long day at work and found myself riveted. I wanted to keep driving so I could hear the entire album again; I actually found myself weighing the cost of gas verses the value of an uninterrupted listen. This is not just a step forward from their previous release, it's in another class altogether. Beautiful interludes meet solid grooves all twisted through a black and death metal mindset. This still sounds like Fearscape, but the musicianship seems to have improved dramatically – the songwriting is well crafted and much better honed – and the vocals are awesome. I will nominate the title track as song of the year too, absolutely brilliant! [Independent] Michael Larson



FALL OF ECHOES

RED TREE

The first thing you'll notice about *Red Tree* upon placing it into your CD player is the immaculate production and superb musicianship. Although drum tracks are used, you really can't tell, because they actually sound acoustic (which is saying a lot based on my acoustic drum bias). Musically, the CD features Alice in Chains-style vocal harmonies and groove-oriented riffs, but from a slightly more traditional metal approach that is quite progressive in nature. "Mr. Onion" begins with a keyboard intro and some acoustic guitar, backed by an 80's-sounding synthesizer, which may sound odd, but really pulls off a nice 80s prog-rock sound. "9th Floor" features some incredible acoustic guitar soloing that almost has a Spanish guitar feel to it. While it might be a stretch to call this a metal record, there is much here to enjoy for the progressive hard rock fan, and this will certainly appeal to fans of quality musicianship in general. Visual Cliff fans should take note, as Fall of Echoes includes guitarists Rick Mals and Rob Perez. [Independent] Loyd Harp

TITANIC

WRECKAGE: THE BEST OF & THE REST OF Sink into this, 17 of the best tracks from Titanic, all remastered. With each listen, wave after wave of no frills heavy metal songs barge through your speakers. Robert Sweet, whose drumming skills are as cold as ice, is featured on four bonus tracks. If you haven't heard this band yet, don't miss the boat! Cruise on down to your local store and climb aboard the Titanic. [Retroactive] Chris Beck



FAITH FACTOR

07/07/07

This 3-song EP is filled with passionate, edifying, evangelical power metal that will make Steve Rowe proud. While the retro 80's Jesus metal here is cool, the wailing vocals leave a bit to be desired. Fans who miss Sacred Warrior will want to keep an eye on these guys as their full length debut is slated for release in '08. [Independent] Jonathan Swank

A PLEA FOR PURGING

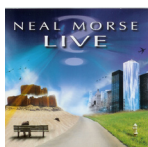
A CRITIQUE OF MIND AND THOUGHT

Facedown, the once traditional-hardcore-only label, has been releasing more and more metal-oriented projects, the latest of which is Nashville's A Plea for Purging. While there's enough hardcore influence to scare away a few close-minded metalheads, there are enough riffs and melodic strains to please many headbangers. Even the breakdowns are more akin to Suicide Silence or Ion Dissonance than any tough guy hxc band. The riffs and solos draw as equally from late 80s thrash as they do from the latest wave of Swedish death metal. Lyrics are of the poetic sort, yet there is much they are screaming about. "Sons of Vipers" points the finger at religious hypocrisy: "Feed your drama to the serpents, your lies. Your stench fills the air, your lies." And then the finger is turned inward: "With your blood on my hands, I speak more about you than with you" ("When the Sparrow Sleeps"). This is powerful stuff. Recommended equally for Gothenburg fans as well as the recent wave of post-metalcore NWOAHM bands. [Facedown Records] Loyd Harp

Surf this: withbloodcomescleansing.net, radiantrecords.com, veridonmusic.com, facedownrecords.com, retroactiveverecords.net

WITH BLOOD COMES CLEANSING HORROR

According to the sticker on the CD, this band is "metal," but I felt that might be a touch misleading. Not that they aren't heavy or even good at what they do, they happen to be both. Death-core is probably the right title for the style they play, though it seems to be more core than death. I like this, but it's not a right fit for me to actually love it. The chugga chugga riffs are too ... well, simple, and the drummer (who is technically great) always seems to opt for the "groove" instead of the brutality. Vocally is where they tend to be the most metal – guttural, low vocals mixed with some high screams. At times it goes from HXC style shouts to Dying Fetus style lows. The thing I like about death metal is the complexity of the riffs, the arrangements and the use of odd time changes. This has the potential to do that, but instead they opted for the HXC school of riff-age and kept it simple musically, while the vocalist is all over the place. I wish I would've heard more of the cross pollination in the music instead of just the vocals. [Victory Records] Michael Larson



NEAL MORSE ? LIVE

Prepare to be edified! In this first live recording since his departure from Spock's Beard (save for Transatlantic), Neal joined forces (in 2006) with some seriously talented European musicians to jam and rejoice at the Columbia Club in Berlin, Germany. Neal and friends seamlessly rip through over two hours of passionate and creative rock. Disc 1 includes the *Question Mark* album – perhaps his most defining work to date – ambitiously played in its entirety; disc 2 includes much of the *One* album plus an 18-minute encore medley. The prog rock complexity of the conceptual music on disc 1 is nicely contrasted with a much more "praise and worship" approach on disc 2. It is here where Neal really opens up with the audience about his life and his faith in a sincere and confessional manner. One of the more touching moments comes when his son joins him on stage to sing "The Man's Gone" and the emotive "Cradle to Grave" – very moving, indeed. [Radiant Records] Jonathan Swank



HORDE

ALIVE IN OSLO (DVD)

Well, holy unblack mates, the day is upon us ... *The Day of Total Armageddon Holocaust*. Extreme metal fans who already possess the live CD of this Nordic Fest exclusive show – the only live performance of Horde to date – will be thrilled to know that the band that "inverted the inverted cross" has released this now infamous recording on DVD. Suffice it to say, it is shockingly engrossing to immerse yourself in this spectacle of metal lashing where the hooded Anonymous fervidly spews forth anti-satanic truths while simultaneously pounding the drums like a madman in perfect synchrony with his masked and somewhat subdued trio of Drottner guitarists. Whether you watch the show in "true" color or in the more appropriate "grim" black and white (or should I say grey) ... just watch it in the dark for maximal effect. Horde Spiller Hellig Usvart Metall, indeed! [Veridon Music] Jonathan Swank

THIEVES AND LIARS

WHEN DREAMS BECOME REALITY

When Dreams Become Reality hearkens back to a time where 6-9 minute songs were normal, jamming was king, and soloing was a reality; and it's a concept album to boot! Based on the biblical story of Joseph, Thieves and Liars' debut catches one by surprise. Founded in part by guitarist Corey Edelmann (ex-No Innocent Victim, Project 86), the power trio is rounded out by bassist/vocalist Joey Bradford and drummer Kyle Rosa; and the record is the first on new Facedown Records imprint Dreamt Music. Yet, nothing about that history clues you in to what you will hear here. The music has more in common with Led Zeppelin than with Earth Crisis. Progressive hard rock that wears its 70's roots on its sleeve is what we have on this debut. And with recent retro-oriented artists as diverse as Jet, Queens of the Stone Age and Wolfmother, *When Dreams Become Reality* should be received well.

[Facedown Records] Loyd Harp



ROSANNA'S RAIDERS

FIRE FROM HEAVEN

While definitely more hard rock than metal, there is enough edge here to enjoy for any rock fan.

This two-disc reissue includes both US releases, 1987's *Calling Down Fire* (the edgier rocking release), and 1988's *Clothed in Fire* (which finds a sound that is slightly more commercial, with a bit more tastefully used keyboards throughout). Aside from these two albums, we also get the rare 1985 *We Are Raiders* release, plus an additional bonus track "One Man" from an Australian compilation. Throughout this set, you'll find tunes that walk a fine line between melodic metal, hard rock, borderline blues hard rock, with a few "pop" style ballads thrown in – overall reminding me of some of the best female fronted rock bands of the late 70's and early 80's. Considering the date of this material, the remastered production is very crisp throughout, making this set just that much better. [Retroactive Records] Jeff McCormack



IMPENDING DOOM

NAILED. DEAD. RISEN

Beautifully brutal death-core that seems much more metal than core. Impending Doom's first full-length has slamming

death riffs, guttural vocals and blast beats mixed with an occasional touch of groove, which is usually found in the obligatory breakdown found in every song. Gone are the piggish squeals that graced the songs on their demos and myspace page, this could be a down side to some. Personally, I thought it was a good move. Everything about this disc is pretty much top notch: the production, performance, even the artwork. Seriously folks, if this is the future of mall metal, I love it. I have listened to this disc more than any other disc I have ever reviewed and still enjoy it thoroughly. What are the trouble spots on the disc? First, the arrangements are simple. Now that's not really a negative thing, as they seem to have a good thing going and they use that to their benefit. Second, I would love to hear more guitar solos, as this is devoid of any (unless you count that semi rhythm part in the background on one song). And last, the songs really all do sound alike. So you're either going to dig this or not; there is no middle ground. Stop by your local CD store today and show some support. [Facedown Records] Michael Larson



Covered in HOLY BLOOD

BY CHRIS BECK

SHORTLY AFTER THE DISSOLUTION OF THE SOVIET UNION IN LATE 1991, 11 OF THE FORMER SOVIET REPUBLICS FORMED THE COMMONWEALTH OF INDEPENDENT STATES, OR CIS. SINCE ITS CREATION, THE CIS HAS BEEN INTEGRAL IN ACCELERATING THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE ECONOMY, MILITARY DEFENSE AND FOREIGN POLICY OF ITS MEMBERS. NATURALLY, WITH THE ADVANCEMENT AND STABILIZATION OF SUCH MATTERS, THE MEMBER STATES HAVE ALSO EXPERIENCED GROWTH IN MANY SOCIETAL LUXURIES, INCLUDING MUSIC. UKRAINE, AN ORIGINAL AND CURRENT MEMBER OF THE CIS, IS HOME TO THE BAND HOLY BLOOD. ACCORDING TO MOZART, LEAD GUITARIST OF HOLY BLOOD, UKRAINE IS SIMILAR TO OTHER PARTS OF THE WORLD IN THAT IT IS DIFFICULT TO ACHIEVE SUCCESS AS A HEAVY METAL BAND. NEVERTHELESS, HOLY BLOOD HAS UNDOUBTEDLY BENEFITED FROM THE INCREASED OPENNESS TO AND PROGRESSION OF THEIR COUNTRY'S ENTERTAINMENT INDUSTRY IN RECENT YEARS.

For those who have never had the opportunity to hear the music of Holy Blood, it is a conglomeration of various musical styles, including black metal, thrash metal and folk. Their music implements the use of numerous instruments, such as flute and keyboard, along with several different vocal styles, resulting in a sound that is full and often disparate, yet still melodic. The use of Slavonic folk melodies is not unusual for bands from CIS countries; however, Holy Blood's music is rather exotic and unlike any band from the United States. In addition to folk music, other bands Mozart identifies as influencing Holy Blood are as diverse as their music and include Extol, Living Sacrifice, Cannibal Corpse and Finntroll.

Holy Blood is, of course, a Christian band. Being from a former Soviet country, I asked them if they have ever suffered persecution because of their beliefs. "You know, we've heard many threats from our ill-wishers," responds Mozart, "but they have never followed through with their threats." The Lord's protection of the band members is perhaps the result of the spiritual support they receive. Fans have probably noticed that in the notes of each of their albums, the band has thanked the pastors from their churches. When asked to describe their relationship with these churches, Mozart explains, "Almost all our band members attend different churches. When the band was formed, the churches helped us with rehearsals and with

organizing small concerts." Mozart continues, "We also thank the pastors for their understanding and spiritual support. This has been important, as many Christians condemn what we do." Alas, the persecution continues. Still, the band continues to stand strong on their beliefs and serve the Lord in many ways. This is exemplified by vocalist Fedor, who leads the Armageddon Metal Church, a church that reaches out mostly to youth in the hard music scene.

Holy Blood has released two full length albums to date—*The Wanderer* and *Waves Are Dancing*, the latter being a melodic black metal masterpiece. For their third album, *The Patriot*, which is scheduled to be released by Bombworks Records in the United States in April, they set out to do something different. According to Mozart, "The material on *The Patriot* was created when the band wanted to change its style to something less melodic. We wanted it to be faster black metal. However, after recording the music, we decided this wasn't the direction we wanted to go, so we have now returned to a more melodic sound, even more so than on *Waves Are Dancing*." Though it would seem Holy Blood's strength is focusing more on melody and less on brutality and speed, *The Patriot* is still a strong album that fans and new listeners alike will enjoy. "On this album, you will find many typical characteristics of Holy Blood's music," affirms Mozart. Reaction to the album has thus far been positive.



“We also thank the pastors for their understanding and spiritual support. This has been important, as many Christians condemn what we do.”

As can be seen from the many concert videos posted on Holy Blood’s website, it’s evident that the concert experience of the audience is very important to the band. What is a typical Holy Blood show like? According to Mozart, “The emotional experience is more important to us than the technicality of our playing. Of course, the quality of our playing is important and we’ve recently worked on improving that. We typically get a strong response from the crowd. Many of them sing and dance while we play.” Given the number of videos available on their website, one would be led to believe that they have played concerts all around the world. Responds Mozart, “During all this time, outside of Ukraine, we have only played in Switzerland, Finland, Moldova and Belarus. We have received a lot of invitations, but sometimes plans are cancelled at the last moment. Holy Blood is one of only a few Ukrainian bands that have played gigs outside the borders of CIS countries.” I asked Mozart whether he thinks Holy Blood will ever play any shows in the United States. “Yes, I think we’ll have to play in the USA eventually,” he says. “A lot of people have asked us to play concerts in the USA, but this really depends on whether we can find a promoter who wants to bring us over. We are certainly open to it.” In the meantime, for those fans longing to see Holy Blood live, the band has plans to eventually release a DVD that will contain videos and background material on the band. The only thing missing is a professional recording of at least one full-length concert. They plan to record this as soon as the opportunity arises. Let’s hope it’s before long.

One thing that quickly becomes obvious when listening to Holy Blood is that all their lyrics are sung in Russian. When asked if they have ever thought of writing their lyrics in English, which is spoken by approximately two to three times as many

people throughout the world, Mozart indicated they’ve never considered this. “It is important that people understand our lyrics where we play our concerts. Since the majority of our shows are played in CIS countries, where everybody understands Russian, it is necessary to sing in Russian. Oh, and the singer doesn’t speak English, so we don’t have a choice.” Fair enough. Mozart also expressed doubt that anyone wouldn’t listen to the band due to the lyrics being in Russian. The music is certainly strong enough to carry each album, but for those who still harbor concern, the Bombworks releases do provide an English translation of the lyrics.

When asked what challenges Holy Blood has experienced over the years, one thing clearly stood out to Mozart: “The band lineup. Many musicians have worked with the band. Fortunately, the current lineup is the one with that has existed the longest. We hope God will keep us together for many years. Otherwise, I can’t remember any difficulties – God has blessed our band very much!” With no major problems currently confronting the band and a new album coming out shortly, what goals does Holy Blood have for the upcoming year? “First, is recording our fourth album,” responds Mozart. “The material is ready and we are preparing to record the album soon. Second, is filming a video for a song from *The Patriot* and recording a concert for the new DVD. Finally, we hope to play concerts in countries where we have not been before. In everything we will obey God’s will. If He wants it, it will happen!”

HEAVENS
ROCKS

The “What So and So Says” Feature

When did you actually start “What So and So Says” and what motivated you to start that feature in the first place?

The people that do Cornerstone Festival had a publication and they interviewed Ozzy Osbourne and they asked him about Jesus and they gave him copies of *Mere Christianity* and they really made an appeal to him as a person to consider faith in Christ ... to consider that Christ was real. So they inspired me to do it, because I thought it was just the coolest idea around. I came upon a couple really core questions that really cut through all the religious baggage: “What do you think about Jesus or what do you think of His claims?” It doesn’t matter what you think about religion or if you’ve been molested by a priest or if you hate Jimmy Swaggart. “What do think about Jesus?” is more important than all that other baggage. If our doctrine is right and what you do with Jesus and what He’s done for you on the cross is what hangs your soul in the eternal balance, then that’s the most important question to ask anyway. It doesn’t really matter what you think about religion. So I came up with a really cool question that I just ask every time. Sometimes it’s hard to ask it if I don’t have a willing participant. Other times it’s easy and other times it surprises me.

My other question along those lines was: “What is it that makes those interviews so popular with the readers?” Because, as you alluded to earlier, a lot of people really do seem to connect with those sections. I

learned early on that religion and politics are two subjects that cause fights and that people don’t want to talk about. When I was a young Jesus freak, I made my 5th grade school teacher cry when I put tracts in everybody’s folder, and I made my grandmother cry because I was asking her about why Grandpa Doc didn’t want to talk about Jesus. She was so upset about it that I brought her to tears. The two people that I really loved and respected, I brought them to tears, because I was confronting people about Jesus. So I kinda knew at an early age that that’s an issue ... it’s a hot button issue. It makes people uncomfortable. So, when you can be a fly on the wall and see somebody approach that subject, it’s very compelling. So, no matter what they say or what direction the conversation goes in, it’s just an interesting read to sit there and see how it goes. I think that is probably why it’s so popular.

I agree. What was the most shocking interview that you ever did or the most extreme response, either negative or positive that you got from doing one of these interviews?

Ah, one of my favorites and most shocking was Peter Steele of Type O Negative: “What do you think of Jesus Christ?” (He replied) “I think He was a fool. I am 200 pounds of meat in motion. When I die, that’s it, I’m gone.” Even though it was a strong negative opinion about who Jesus was, he laid it out there. That’s my favorite because it was so strong. Henry Rollins (Black Flag, Rollins Band) almost threatening to beat me up over the phone ... that was an interesting interview.

Did anyone ever call you back and thank you for asking them about Jesus during an interview?

I’ve had people thank me for it or an “appreciate that.” It wasn’t actually a call back situation, but I have actually hung out and talked with this guy on a few other occasions since then ... and that was Damon Johnson of Brother Cane – one of the best bands in the universe by far; never wrote a bad song.

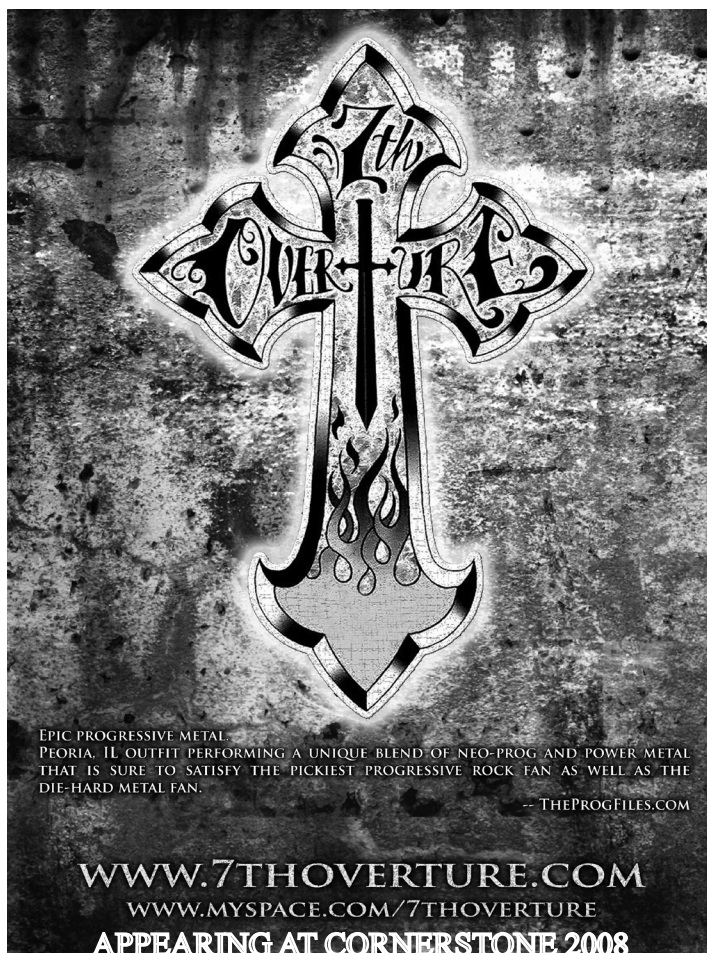
The Music

I’m gonna shift gears here and talk about music, which is something that I know lies close to your heart. What is it about music, particularly hard music or heavy metal that makes us go nuts?

It’s an extreme form of music. It takes a few things about music to an extreme. Like Classical music does ... the dynamics of it, where something’s really soft then it builds into a crescendo and then explodes. Metal uses amplified guitars and drums that are miked and big bass guitars that are just full of distortion and sound systems that pump out 110+ dBs. So, it just amplifies all the passion and the grandeur, beauty and all the dynamics of classical music. Things that make music great, it just amplifies them. Like you like to say, Doc: “Worship at 11.” It does that and so that is one thing that makes metal great.

Awesome. How do you define a great song?

A song I wanna hear again and a song I can’t get out of my head. For better or worse, it wouldn’t take me long to quote you lyrics from Aerosmith’s 1975 *Toys in the Attic* album or 76’s *Rocks* album. Those are albums that I listened to as a junior high and high school kid and they became ingrained in my head because their melodies are catchy and it makes me wanna come back to it and those albums have accompanied me on road trips and my journey through / in life. When a song becomes a soundtrack



of your life, it becomes *your* song. So, any song that has those qualities and that can do that for you might be classified as “great.” Something that is timeless... Some music is kinda throwaway and disposable and might be popular for a short season, but it doesn’t have lasting power. So, a lot of it has to do with melody and something that sticks with you, whether it’s a vocal or a guitar or an instrumental.

Okay, and along those same lines, because you have probably listened to thousands of bands over the past 20 years... What, to you, makes a band stand out from the crowd?

Being able to “bring it” live. Like one of my favorite bands... and if I get a chance to interview them soon I want to try to find a tactful way to ask them, “How does it feel to know you suck live and are not half as good as your albums?” But there is a band called H.I.M. (which stands for His Infernal Majesty, which is kinda evil and satanic), but musically they just really sound great on their albums ... but I saw them in concert and they just sounded awful. I don’t know how much of that was the soundman, but I attributed that to the band not being able to know how to pull off their sound live. Some hardcore music... I love watching some hardcore bands live. I won’t necessarily listen to an extreme metalcore or hardcore band in my car as often as I will something that is melodic, but in concert, the energy that is transmitted, that comes across, the emotions that are apparent in real high intensity energy is a wonderful thing ... So that is something that makes a band stand apart ... being able to conjure that.

What’s your favorite type of music?

Ah, I don’t know ... it kinda changes over time. One of my all-time favorites is Southern Rock. Like the band Blackfoot and Brother Cane kinda touches some of those same levels. And then the new Southern metal that’s coming out, like Maylene & the Sons of Disaster ... you know, tapping into that raw energy. I really like Goth – dark, doomy music like Type O Negative and HIM. Those are two of my favorite bands, like guilty pleasures. And I have always had a soft spot for melodic metal, like what Stryper used to do, and some of the Dream Theater ballads, like the song “Another Day” from their *Images and Words* album...

Now that album, I mean ... amazing ... we could spend hours talking about it. Well, give me one or two of your top albums from 2007.

Paramore’s *Riot* album. I think that’s fantastic. The Demon Hunter album, *Storm the Gates of Hell*. I think that’s really good.

If you had to pick a favorite metal band of all time...

That is so hard. If I had to pick one album to live with on a desert island... You know you'd get sick of that album, so after a while you would probably throw it like a Frisbee and then be like, "Oh, I hope it didn't break." But, I would probably go with King's X, just because they have been able to keep their career going over the long haul. They have put out so much good music and they are so innovative. And most of their songs, up until the change in Doug Pinnick... Some of his songs seem to talk about running away from God and not believing in God, but they are still compelling and about God. Stryper was certainly a highlight for me and then a band called Joshua had an album called *Intense Defense* and that was probably one of the best melodic metal albums of all time that never got appreciated by a wide audience. There is a lot of good stuff to point to ... it's pretty hard to narrow it down to just one.

The Christian Hard Music Scene

Let's move on and talk about the current Christian music scene. How have you seen the industry change? Give one way in which it has changed in a good way and then one bad way.

Okay. I guess in a good way a lot of Christians have realized that there needs to be a "renaissance" and that being an artist or musician is a good vocation in and of itself. It's one of the first three vocations mentioned in the Bible, along with farming and making tools. Music doesn't have to be accepted or be appreciated on the fringes of life, but it's a noble vocation. Art in and of itself is an honoring thing to God. It doesn't have to be only acceptable to us if it is used as a tool for evangelism. This is what a lot of old people did to accept this horrible new form of music called rock music; because it was being used to reach kids for Jesus, it could be tolerated. That mindset has changed. A lot of bands are out there in the mainstream doing their music of excellence and taking their music to the marketplace of ideas. And, of course, some people think that they've taken the cross out and watered down the Gospel and that they are ashamed of Jesus. Those are pretty strong accusations to make, and they should think twice before they throw those out there, because accusing someone of backing down about Jesus or hiding the Gospel is like calling them Judas Iscariot, and that's a serious accusation to make. They should bite their tongue three times before they ever say that. So, it's a good thing that mindset has changed and that it's opened up the door and Christian music is flourishing out there, and a lot of the bands that are leaders in their fields are Christians. I think that influences our culture in a cool way. Some people would see that as bad, like the message of metal is gone by the wayside. There is still a place for that; I think there is room in the body of Christ

for both. But I am excited that things are expanding and growing.

What's bad about the industry?

Well, Christian entertainment in general, is funded by "Becky," who is the 40 year old soccer mom. 19 and even 25 year old Christian metalheads don't send checks into TBN or to their Christian radio stations every month. But Becky does. Becky listens to Steven Curtis Chapman and Mercy Me and Crowning whatever their name is... All that syrupy, sappy, crappy music that gets played on TBN and Christian radio. The reason the radio stations play that kind of music is because the audience that supports it financially is the stuff that likes it ... that wants to hear Barry Manilow on Jesus. That's what's bad about Christian entertainment and music. One: everyone has taken a non-profit model with that, because it's cheaper, and they are not competing with the world and being a commercial radio station by selling ads to Pepsi and Ford Motor Company. So, because they're listener supported, the only ones that actually come to the plate with a checkbook is the 40 year-old soccer mom. Christian radio sucks. It's just a lot of sappy music...

The Mmm

Describe yourself—what you would consider the essence of Doug Van Pelt—in five words or less.

Oh, my gosh. Uh, I have the ability to cry...

That's a great answer by the way, you can stop there.

I love Jesus, because I'm (like) a prostitute that He set free and cleaned up. I know it's probably possible for me to forget – for my heart to grow cold – but it seems impossible to turn my back on the lover of my soul.

Okay, describe an ideal day in the life of Doug Van Pelt.

It involves a nice inspiring time in prayer. It involves a trip to Best Buy with some cash. It involves watching a DVD on the couch with my wife. At some point it involves listening to some music really loud ... probably the band Muse or H.I.M. or Type O Negative or Mute Math ... or maybe even Brother Cane... And a nice sunny day, where I can be outside and pet my cats – whether it's my ranch cats or my house cats – and my dog and do something fun with my kids where they are laughing and smiling and hugging me a lot.

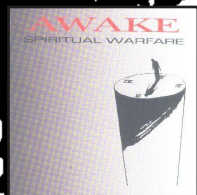
HEAVEN'S

Portions of this interview continue on the back page. For the entire thing, go to hmmag.com

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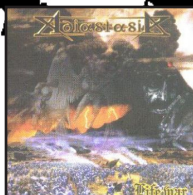
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PASTOR BOB'S INTERNATIONAL REPORT

By Pastor Bob

I have been involved with Christian music since 1970. I guess that makes me a geezer! Over the years, I have worked with some great bands as well as their devoted fans. Honestly, it has always been a true labor of love. I continue to enjoy what I do more than anything!

The MySpace phenomena has been interesting. It has re-connected me with so many that I have lost touch with over the years. Every day I receive "friends' requests" from people telling me that they remember seeing my picture on an album sleeve, or they simply want to thank me for "hanging in there" all of these years. That really means a lot to me. Through the years, it has been exciting to watch God work through the ministry of heavy metal music. For all of those nay-sayers in the 80's who believed the music was "of the Devil" and could not possibly be used to spread the Gospel, we have thousands all these years later who are walking with the Lord as a result of the ministry. That should be encouraging to the newer bands who are just beginning their ministry. Stay true to your calling. Boldly bringing the Word of God without compromise is still as valid as it has ever been. I continue to be more and more encouraged as I see the newer bands sharing their faith through their music. We still have some exciting days ahead!

[myspace.com/pastorbobbeeman]



USA, New Zealand, Russian Federation & metal *Dave Hart, Trevor Ray & Piotr "Frankie" Varlamov*



Dave Hart Sanctuary, San Diego

These days, Sanctuary is a home Bible study that meets on Thursday evenings at the Sanctuary House (a large 2 ½ story home where half a dozen Sanctuary members live). Last year, we looked at George Hunter's *The Celtic Way of Evangelism*. This year we're talking about being mature Christians in 1 Thessalonians. We are active with GVA – the Gothic Volunteer Alliance (formerly Goth Help Us). Through GVA, we work with Goths of all spiritual persuasions to participate in blood drives, graffiti paint-outs, beach clean-ups, animal shelters, and other volunteer efforts. We are not only at peace with our neighbors – we stand in good reputation with them (Heb. 12:14; 1 Tim. 3:7). We also socialize with our Goth friends by going to clubs. This week we'll hit a club with two of our favorite DJs at a CD release party for the new Bauhaus album. Also of note – our in-house band, the SIGMA Project, is negotiating with Eric of Saviour Machine to produce their first album.



Trevor Ray New Zealand

When reporting about Christian metal in New Zealand at the moment ————silence. It is a like a dreary desert land that once had an oasis and now has very little existence or is barely surviving. One can hear the



tumble weed brushing over the sand, not the terrorizing of a guitar or the thumping of a double bass drum. But in the secular scene, things are starting to rejuvenate; and this may cause some revival here even for the Christian scene. Rock to Wellington or Rock2Wtgn is a secular metal concert happening in Easter (March 22-23) starring big attractions like Ozzy Osborne, Poison, KISS, Lordi from Europe, Alice Cooper, Whitesnake. This two night concert is now gathering the international attention of international news media and news about it is spreading. 25,000 tickets have been sold already. An exciting side feature is that 6 local unknown guitar maestros were selected out of 200. During a 10 minute section, each guitarist will have a guitar updated with special reflective tiles which will give an extra visual effect while on stage. This extra visual magical effect is being done by Weta Workshop who did the stage gear for *Lord of the Rings* and *King Kong*. While this has caused excitement for the metalheads young and old in New Zealand, it has caused a reaction from Wellington churches who are trying to take on the local government to stop the concert. The reaction towards the concerts is two fold: first, Lifepoint Pastor Karen Crawshaw feels such acts are not appropriate for New Zealand youth as they will have negative influences on

them; and the concert is billed on a day in which Christians remember the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Have to wait and see if any decision will be done, but it should take off without any delay compared to the shooting down of the now defunct million dollar air show Wings and Wheels Over Waikato billed for Hamilton city.

Piotr "Frankie" Varlamov, Nalchik, Russian Federation

The scene of the Russian Christian alternative started when P.O.D. became famous. I can tell you that there is no Christian metal scene at all in Russia. In the 90's we had the heavy metal band Новый Завет (New Testament). The power-metal band Regnum, from Penza, plays Nightwish covers with Russian Christ-oriented lyrics. On the North-West of Russia the raw old-school thrash metal band Living Stones have released 2 albums. On the South of Russia, where about 70% inhabitants are Muslim, we founded the death metal band Megilloth. As I know, this is the only Russian Christian band singing in English. We now have a demo you can download at myspace.com/megilloth. All famous Russian bands (except Gorky Park) prefer to sing in Russian as most people in Russia don't speak foreign languages and don't like songs in English.

THROWING DOWN THE GAUNTLET

By Steve Rowe

SEEING THE POSITIVES

Anyone who knows me even a little knows that I am dead against illegal stealing of songs from the internet. The internet has had a huge impact on the music industry in a very negative, but also a very positive way. The positives are that bands, especially young bands, can quickly get exposure through their own Myspace or Facebook.

Computers have actually made home recordings quite a cost saver – compared with the price of pro studios. So from this perspective, the whole process can really be balanced out in a positive way for young bands looking to get noticed.

I see YouTube also as a positive. It would have been nice for fans to ask me before they put all the older Mortification clips on YouTube. However, it has given Mort some serious exposure to the younger metal fans of the world. Over 97,000 people have viewed the "Scrolls of The Megilloth" clip alone. This has created some great discussion amongst metal fans world wide and, with the clip getting a four star plus rating, people are taking notice.

So within the next months, I will be "You Tubing" myself, letting everyone know where the quality DVDs can be purchased. When the *Live*

Humanitarian DVD comes out I just hope fans let me expose snippets from a couple of songs along with DVD purchase info. It is great that so many people are being exposed to Jesus Metal and discussing Christianity, because of the clips. For this I pray God touches people's hearts.

The down side is that the *Live Planetarium* DVD re-issue has sold just 500 copies, which is so small in comparison with the tens of thousands of people viewing the clips on YouTube. "Scrolls of The Megilloth" is a bonus clip on *Live Planetarium*. All the clips from *Grind Planets* are also on YouTube making the DVD sales of that re-issue really stagnant. When we consider that the coming *Live Humanitarian* DVD is a huge world-class production, we can see a possible imbalance if fans abuse the situation.

So, the old saying: "If you can't beat them, join them" comes into play. I will be doing 2 or 3 Mortification/Steve Rowe "You Tubes" before the end of this year to turn the positives of YouTube into some more positives – the most important positive being that YouTube watchers will have the ability to contact the band with questions relating to Jesus Metal and Christianity.



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the Christian life

What, do you discern, is the essence of being a Christian? Of the Christian life?

Gosh, what a question. Well, this isn't really your question, but I think just the label Christian, it isn't really a label we should ever claim. We should never say "I'm a Christian," because what we are saying – according to the English language – is that I am like Christ, "I'm a little Jesus." It's a compliment and because it's a compliment it's not something you should say about yourself. Somebody else should call you a Christian. The label Christian is something that should be said of us and not something we claim or tell other people that we are. So, I think that kind of touches on the question of the essence of being a Christian is that it is something that is said about you ... which will again touch on the fact that you should be *doing* something. It shouldn't just be all talk. You should be doing something that other people see, not just hear, coming from you that would make people say, "This person is like Jesus. This person reminds me of Christ."

I think the essence of Christianity is grace. It's God giving you something that you don't deserve and a right standing with God based upon what Jesus did. I think the essence of the Christian life is understanding the believer's rest – knowing that the work has been done and all you have to do is accept it and you can rest. The reason God rested after the 6th day wasn't because He was tired but because He was done. The believer can rest in knowing that the work of Christianity is done – already finished – and all we have to do is rest in that. That doesn't negate the purpose of hard work and struggle, but I think it sheds some light on it.

If Jesus came back tomorrow, what do you think He would say about His bride?

Well, honestly, I think He would...

Well, maybe the better way to ask that question is, "What do you think He would say to (rather than about) His bride?"

I think what He would say to his bride are the same things a young, honeymooning groom would say to his bride. It would be those lovey, dovey things. It would be ... the look in His eyes – would tell you all you needed to know. That look of adoration. "We are face to face now; you are the object of my affection." That is my honest answer. The bride has been cleansed, and the bride who has screwed up and made mistakes ... those are forgiven and those are water under the bridge for Him. I think when we are face to face with Christ for the first time He's not gonna get down to corporate business and talk about things we screwed up on. He's gonna say ... it's gonna be all about that love thing.

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